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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Annual report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to the Economic and Social Council

SUMMARY

The present report responds to resolution 1994/33 of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that sets out the format and content of annual reports of the Executive Director of UNFPA to the Council through the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board.

It contains an outline of measures taken in the implementation of the provisions of the Triennial Policy Review of Operational Activities, most recently enunciated in General Assembly resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995. It also contains a report on the designated theme for the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment of ECOSOC. By its decision 1996/310 of 13 November 1996, ECOSOC decided that the 1977 high-level meeting should focus on follow-up to implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996 on funding for operational activities for development. The third part outlines follow-up to the major international conferences and summits, including implementation of their respective programmes of action in response to ECOSOC resolution 1996/36 of 26 July 1996. The final section is on strengthening collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions as called for in ECOSOC resolution 1996/43 of 26 July 1996.

In its decision 97/20, the Executive Board took note of the report and agreed to transmit it to the Council.

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I. Follow-up to the Implementation of General Assembly Resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 and Follow-up to ECOSOC Resolution 1996/42: Progress on the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 50/120

1. During 1996, UNFPA continued implementation of measures called for in the series of resolutions on the triennial policy reviews of operational activities adopted by the General Assembly, the latest of which is General Assembly resolution 50/120. In this regard, the Executive Director of the UNFPA regards the triennial reviews as a continuum allowing for consolidated reporting on implementation of the series of related resolutions.

2. UNFPA implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120 is fully in accordance with paragraph 52 of the resolution and contained in annex II of the report on "Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: Progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120" (E/1996/64). Accordingly, this report gives due attention to capacity-building, field and regional level coordination, and resources. ECOSOC is to review these areas at its 1997 substantive session on the basis of a report by the Secretary-General to which UNFPA has contributed. The present report focuses on aspects specific to UNFPA.

A. Programme matters

Programme approach

3. UNFPA's strong commitment to the programme approach has evolved through years of recognition of its benefits and through the Fund's experience with the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) exercise. Further efforts are under way to adapt this experience to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). To this end, UNFPA is developing guidelines for operationalizing its new core programme areas, namely reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health; population and development strategies; and advocacy. Substantive guidelines in these areas were prepared in 1995 following the ICPD. The programming structure is now being revised to channel assistance into sub-programmes based on thematic or geographic foci within the overall country programme. The "clustering" of activities around sub-programmes is expected to allow for greater coordination and effectiveness of population activities and will further enhance the programme approach. The Fund participates actively in system-wide efforts, mainly through the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), to examine and redefine the programme approach. Implementation at country level calls for an endorsement by governments of this approach. UNFPA is confident that the conduct of Common Country Assessments will also assist in developing an holistic approach.

Harmonization of programme cycles and programming procedures

4. The process of harmonizing the programme cycles of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Food Programme (WFP) has now been institutionalized as part of the annual reporting requirements of the Resident Coordinator system. UNFPA is fully committed to such harmonization as a first step towards strengthening impact of programme delivery. As of 1996, more than 90 per cent of all countries in which the partners of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) had programmes had reached agreements on harmonization. Political difficulties in some countries have impeded progress on reaching an agreed timetable. Monitoring will continue through the reporting requirements of the Resident Coordinator system. During the review of UNFPA country programmes, the Fund continues to take the need for harmonization of cycles into account in deciding on the extension, shortening or bridging of its programmes.

5. UNFPA recognizes the advantages of streamlining and harmonizing rules and procedures within the United Nations development system in order to make programme delivery more cost-effective and to enhance national execution. UNFPA is a small organization in a specialized field and sets a high premium on close coordination and cooperation with development partners. To this end,UNFPA takes a pro-active approach to the Fund's participation in coordinating mechanisms such as JCGP and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). Recent achievements in these bodies include issuance of Guidelines for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Operational Activities for JCGP Member Agencies and the development of draft guidelines for the implementation of Common Country Assessments. In addition, the JCGP Subgroup on Programme Implementation and Country-Level Management has started work on the harmonization of programme procedures. An important step in overall coordination efforts has been the compilation and issuance of the CCPOQ Operational Activities Reference Manual in late 1996, which contains legislation, guidelines and administrative arrangements agreed to or recognized by the ACC for the delivery of development assistance. UNFPA also continues to work closely with other organizations in specific areas, such as the current consultations within UNDP on the development of national execution guidelines and the gender mainstreaming exercise that is being undertaken with UNDP and UNICEF.

Country Strategy Note

6. UNFPA continues to be an active partner in the Country Strategy Note (CSN) exercises. By late 1996, CSNs were in various stages of development in 87 countries. They have, in general, fostered exchange and coordination among the different partners in development. UNFPA headquarters provides innovative support through emphasis on the CSN in programme-related training and by stressing linkages to the CSN in policy guidelines such as those for the PRSD.

UNFPA is also actively involved in the initiative on common country assessments which is designed, *inter alia*, to provide critical substantive inputs to the development of CSNs. The success of the CSN, however, depends on their acceptance by governments. UNFPA offices have reported that despite the advantages of the CSNs, political difficulties have prevented them from achieving full effectiveness.

Common manual

7. As reported, the CCPOQ has completed preparation of its Operational Activities Reference Manual. UNFPA has forwarded this to all country offices so that it can be used as a system-wide complement to other documents produced by UNFPA and by other funds and agencies in cooperation with UNFPA. Further work within the JCGP and CCPOQ is needed on harmonization of programming policies and procedures into a common manual.

National execution and national capacity-building

8. UNFPA continues to extend the highest priority to strengthening the capacity of governments to coordinate population assistance in their countries and to enhance the capacity of national institutions to execute UNFPA-funded projects. UNFPA's programming process concentrates on inclusion of pertinent criteria and assessments of national capacity-building from the time of the initial PRSD exercise up to final implementation. These assessments are methodically supplemented by regional and subregional reviews and initiatives. UNFPA's ongoing review of the PRSD guidelines strives to further emphasize the necessity and importance of evaluating national self-reliance. The Fund is also concurrently revising guidelines in the area of national execution and national capacity- building and finalizing those on the assessment of the capacity of national institutions. Training of national project staff is being offered in a number of areas, and national staff are being increasingly used in keeping with the Guidelines for the Recruitment and Administration of National Project Staff. In the context of UNFPA's Technical Support Services (TSS) arrangement, the first level of expertise is the use of national consultants; UNFPA's Country Support Teams (CSTs) provide backstopping only if this is not otherwise available. The Fund is currently revising its Guidelines on Technical Support Services to ensure that national expertise is exhaustively employed.

9. Given the key role that national capacity-building plays in the United Nations development system, UNFPA's efforts at better inter-agency coordination have been carried out with the intent to strengthen overall efforts at building national capacities. Notable progress has been made in various coordination mechanisms and processes in the context of country programmes and projects. For example, UNFPA has continued to participate actively in the formulation of CSNs and in other processes to improve programme coordination, such as in India, where the United Nations system cooperation has been very active and UNFPA has been a full participant in this

process. The new mechanism of Common Country Assessments is developing well with the strong involvement of United Nations country offices, including those of UNFPA. Through these processes, as well as through theme groups within the Resident Coordinator system, UNFPA country programmes seek to build and expand collaborative programming and co-financing or parallel financing of projects. Even where actual joint activities may not be pursued, efforts are encouraged to harmonize strategies, approaches and master plans, in line with national needs and priorities. In short, UNFPA is striving to ensure that materials produced by inter-agency task forces and examples of best practices are gradually expanded and further developed in programme countries with a view to strengthening national capacities.

Common field-level guidelines on recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel

10. With a view to building national capacity, UNFPA supports national project personnel, consisting of nationally-recruited project professional (NRPP) and general service support staff. They are recruited to provide additional support to host governments in the implementation of UNFPA-supported projects. These project staff are recruited and paid in accordance with guidelines common to UNFPA and UNDP for the recruitment and administration of national project staff. The employment of such personnel contributes to the strengthening of national capacity and makes full use of qualified national human resources. UNFPA also participates in current efforts of the JCGP Subgroup on Programme Implementation and Country-Level Management to further harmonize the recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel.

Monitoring and evaluation

11. UNFPA is revising its monitoring and evaluation guidelines, including procedures as well as tools and instruments, as part of the effort of updating programming guidelines. This is being done with the participation of field as well as headquarters staff and in consultation with other United Nations organizations. In line with the new thematic focus following the ICPD, much work is being done to develop indicators for monitoring and evaluation of programmes in the three core programme areas. This is being done through expert group meetings and workshops that bring together experts from both within and outside the United Nations system. Particular attention is being paid to assessing and learning from past experience in programming UNFPA's support for national population programmes. The programme presentation to the Executive Board on proposals for UNFPA support of country programmes now systematically includes sections on lessons learned and on how these are being applied.

Promoting greater collaboration in evaluation

12. UNFPA continues its active participation in the meetings of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation, where information on developments in evaluation techniques and systems are shared. With the widespread use of electronic mail, such cross-fertilization takes place also outside the forum of the working group's annual meetings. Evaluation officials of the JCGP group maintain particularly close contact; a recent example was a JCGP workshop on monitoring and evaluation that took place in New York in January 1997. Issues of special focus at the workshop included rating systems and performance measurement. UNFPA has sent the guidelines on monitoring and evaluation that resulted from the meeting to all its country offices.

Management audit and aid accountability

13. The main mechanism for the exchange and coordination of internal audit issues continues to be the annual Meeting of the Representatives of the United Nations Organizations and Multilateral Financial Institutions. The UNDP Division for Audit and Management Review (DAMR), which includes the UNFPA Internal Audit Section, is an active participant in these discussions. At the same time, UNFPA management continues to employ mutually reinforcing means to communicate responsibility, assess performance and measure results in order to obtain assurances with regard to accountability, especially in the context of UNFPA's policy on decentralization. In addition to mandatory project and programme evaluations, such means encompass: (a) overall guidance on policies and procedures, including circulars on audit activities and findings; (b) the system of annual Performance Appraisal Reviews based on detailed Individual Performance Plans and the convening of Management Review Groups; (c) internal audit services provided by the Division for Audit and Management Review to assess the adequacy of internal controls and to advise UNFPA management on areas in need of improvement; and (d) policy application reviews, conducted in UNFPA country offices to ensure, *inter alia*, compliance with UNFPA's substantive policies and programme guidelines. Follow-up to issues of internal oversight are now coordinated by the Office of Oversight and Evaluation, established in December 1996 and reporting directly to the Executive Director. Moreover, internal audit issues are regularly discussed by the UNFPA Executive Committee, consisting of all senior staff at headquarters. UNFPA fully realizes the need to further expand audit coverage and to ensure effective follow-up.

Coordination at regional and subregional levels

14. UNFPA activities at the regional and subregional levels are designed to enhance coordination and effectiveness of programme interventions. Programme review, formulation and approval processes give foremost consideration to overall coordination of population activities. The Fund consults with its counterpart United Nations agencies and other organizations, including

donors, at all levels of programme assistance to ensure coordination and to promote collaborative initiatives. UNFPA has also organized a series of technical meetings to focus on priority concerns within the geographical regions where the Fund is working and to improve programmatic responses of the agencies and donor communities to population needs. In these efforts, UNFPA draws on a wide range of expertise, including those available under the TSS system, in particular the CSTs, which are composed of experts from United Nations agencies in various population disciplines. The TSS system has also facilitated regular consultation and dialogue between and within the agencies on technical and programmatic concerns and has created an environment that is more dynamic and has greater flexibility in responding to emerging needs. An element of duplication of activity in this field, however, is bound to continue until tighter coordination mechanism are in place.

Decentralization

15. UNFPA continues to implement its decentralization guidelines and procedures in an effort to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery. Currently, 14 UNFPA Representatives have been granted full decentralized approval authority, while approval authority for country projects for all other countries has increased from $500,000 to $750,000 since 1993. In 1996, 80 per cent of the country projects were approved by UNFPA Representatives under decentralized approval authority, as compared to 41 per cent in 1993. In order to facilitate the decentralization process, UNFPA is working towards strengthening the capacities of its country offices through training activities and the internal restructuring of its programme and financial operations. The Fund has also placed greater emphasis on ensuring the feasibility of execution modalities and implementation plans of country projects. Concurrently, UNFPA has stepped up monitoring of this process so that the Fund reviews the appraisal and approval of projects on a regular basis to ensure that procedures are being followed and to identify any potential gaps in the system. UNFPA is also revising its guidelines to strengthen the implementation and effectiveness of decentralization. An overall review of the decentralization process has indicated a reduction in the time-lag between project appraisal and final approval, thereby improving the implementation and delivery rates, as well as facilitating an increase in the use of national experts in the formulation and implementation of projects. UNFPA is moving towards full decentralization of programme approval authority with the current revision of its programming procedures.

B. Management, personnel and finance matters

Scope for improving cost-effectiveness of administrative services

16. During the past year, significant progress has been made in coordination in the area of management, personnel and finance. This has been facilitated by the close cooperation and frank exchange of information that UNFPA maintains with other JCGP partners, most significantly with

UNDP and UNICEF. UNFPA contributes to efforts to better structure JCGP meetings and to redress longstanding issues concerning operations and premises in specific duty stations. Methodologies and operational guidelines for pending and future projects are also under way.

Harmonization of budget presentations

17. Considerable progress has been achieved in the harmonization of the budget presentations of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA following decision 94/30 of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. Subsequent to the review by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) late last year, at the first regular session 1997 the Executive Board agreed with the proposed common format for presentation of the biennial support budget, using common terms and definitions and a common methodology for preparing budget estimates. Consequently, the biennial support budget for 1998-1999 will be prepared according to this harmonized format for submission to the Executive Board at its third regular session in September 1997.

Common premises and administrative services

18. In line with the plan to substantially increase the number of countries where United Nations agencies share common premises and services, the JCGP Subgroup on Common Premises and Services is pursuing the need to develop a comprehensive methodology and to define operational guidelines to serve as the basis of all common premises and service projects. A request for project proposal (RFP) has been issued to secure professional expertise in the areas of a cost-benefit matrix, development of specific criteria and for operational guidelines to address rights and responsibilities of respective agencies in the ownership, renovation and eventual disposal of such premises, cost sharing mechanisms, cost controls and project management protocol. The methodology adopted is to form the basis for decision-making under future common premises projects. This infusion of technical expertise is necessary to provide the necessary methodology for evaluation purposes. The importance of potential synergies in adopting common services over a variety of core functions as a prerequisite of evaluation has been recognized and stressed by the JCGP subgroup.

Training

19. UNFPA continues to promote and participate in inter-agency collaborative training. UNFPA Representatives have participated in the field coordination workshops for senior United Nations system representatives conducted by the Turin Centre. The training package for promoting the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action, which will be used by the JCGP agencies in their country offices, is being finalized. Together with its JCGP partners, UNFPA is identifying key areas for future collaborative training. These include the development and application of tools to improve programme design and appraisal, developing indicators for monitoring and impact

assessment as well as mechanisms for strengthening national capacity. With regard to management training, UNFPA proposes to continue to work within the JCGP group to enhance and improve the management skills of its staff and to develop a competency-based training package that addresses gender equity and diversity, team-building and negotiation skills.

20. UNFPA has also further decentralized approval authority for local training to country offices, to facilitate participation of its field staff in both in-country as well as regional inter-agency training initiatives. UNFPA continues to give high priority to the training of its field staff, and approximately 75 per cent of the training budget has been allocated for his purpose.

Gender balance in appointments

21. With a long-term goal of 50:50 representation of women and men in professional positions, the Fund continues to take action to achieve gender balance in recruitment and appointment of staff. As of December 1996, the proportion of women professionals had reached 48 per cent. UNFPA has been able to increase this percentage annually by placing emphasis on the selection and recruitment of women. It should be underscored that the growth in the proportion of women professionals has been achieved without compromising recruitment and promotion criteria. Women have also fared well in moving from the general service to the professional category -- in the past ten years, six of the seven general service staff to do so were women.

22. UNFPA has continued its efforts to dispel the notion that general service jobs are "female" positions by encouraging the recruitment of men to fill such positions. Although the Fund's success has not been remarkable, there has been a fair increase of men in this category of staff.

23. Special attention continues to be paid to the placement of women in mid-level positions with decision-making and managerial responsibilities. Women are encouraged to participate in various management training programmes offered through JCGP, UNDP and UNFPA's own training programme. It should be noted that seven out of the twelve members of the UNFPA Executive Committee are women, including the Executive Director as Chairperson.

24. UNFPA's practice of giving special attention to the identification of women candidates has continued to be applied in the recruitment of members of the TSS system, including the CSTs. Of the total number of technical experts recruited by UNFPA in the system, 45 per cent are women.

II. Follow-up to General Assembly Resolution 50/227: Further Measures for the Restructuring and Revitalization of the United Nations in the Economic, Social and Related Fields, Annex I, Section I: Funding of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System

A. Coordination and some constraints to headquarters functioning

25. ECOSOC has served as one of the primary vehicles for introducing reform in the economic, social and related fields of the United Nations system. The Member States of the United Nations have articulated their concerns in several fora and have conveyed their instructions through various General Assembly resolutions, such as 48/162 in 1994 and 50/227 in 1996. UNFPA has welcomed these measures for reform and continues with efforts to improve its own programme effectiveness, coordination and collaboration with all its partners in the United Nations system, NGOs and bilateral donors. UNFPA is also an active participant in a number of global level inter-agency coordination mechanisms, including the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), UNFPA's own collaboration mechanisms and various tripartite and bilateral consultation and coordination arrangements. UNFPA has also strongly supported the Resident Coordinator system and the implementation of all relevant United Nations decisions.

26. Clearly, one of the most important purposes of these valuable decisions has been to prevent duplication of development efforts in the field and to optimize available resources for the best discharge of mandates. At the same time, efforts to streamline reporting requirements require attention. For a small organization such as the UNFPA, the increasing requests for reporting can pose a serious burden. UNFPA estimates, for example, that documentation for the summer session of ECOSOC has 53 reports of the Secretary-General -- many of which require UNFPA inputs -- and an additional 26 reports of the subsidiary bodies, 4 reports on organizational matters and 2 major publications, totaling approximately 2,874 pages. If the effort needed for the four-week deliberations of the ECOSOC is placed in an annual perspective that includes the demands from various other intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies, the unsustainabilty of the reporting requirements and the disproportionate use of staff for these purposes can be better gauged. A streamlining of reporting requirements would have significant impact on the cost-effective use of limited programme resources.

B. Implications on operational activities of recent trends in core and other resources

27. In 1996, the Fund's income totaled approximately $309 million (provisional) -- a slight decrease from the 1995 income level of $312.6 million. However, total contributions reached a new high of $302.5 million, pledged by 95 governments. Fourteen major donors whose contributions equaled or exceeded $1 million, contributed $296.3 million or 98 per cent of the total core resources. Compared to 1995, contributions in 1996 decreased in dollar terms by 0.13 per

cent although in terms of national currencies many countries increased their contributions. At end 1996, cumulative contributions totaled over $3.7 billion. Income generated through multi-bilateral arrangements totaled $18.3 million (provisional), an increase of 28.9 per cent over the 1995 level of $14.2 million.

28. Due to the strong momentum created by the ICPD in September 1994, UNFPA's total income has exceeded $600 million for the two-year period 1995 and 1996. For 1997, it appears, on the basis of the major donors who have already pledged and other top donors who have given us their projections, that the Fund's income will again exceed the $300 million mark.

29. However, as the experience in 1996 shows, projecting an income level for a voluntary United Nations funding agency is full of uncertainty. In 1996, over 33 per cent of total pledges were still outstanding in the last quarter of the year. This caused significant cash flow problems for the organization. On the programming side, the uncertainty of income negatively affects programming confidence.

30. On the positive side, there seems to be an encouraging trend in terms of population assistance. Despite the continuing decline in real growth of total official development assistance (ODA), funding for population assistance, including loans from the World Bank, seems to be gradually increasing. In 1994, approximately $1.4 billion was devoted to population. Although the data for 1995 are still incomplete, it appears that approximately $2 billion was committed to population programmes. It is still too early to state the level of commitment provided in 1996. One reason for this shift may be a decision by the donors to allot a larger percentage of ODA to the social, education and health sectors. This would also augur well for the 20/20 concept. Maintaining this momentum will be one of UNFPA's principal challenges. Major donors still face uphill struggles in increasing their ODA as they confront budget-cutting pressures and other domestic economic concerns.

C. Recommendations on increasing core resources

31. UNFPA has attempted to mobilize additional resources for its programmes through various mechanisms, including using existing funds more efficiently, working for a larger share from within existing resource pools, and developing new sources of funding. UNFPA has also worked with programme countries for increased expenditure on basic social services so that the vast bulk of resources for provision of the basic social services within the Fund's mandate continues to come from the national governments and communities concerned, supplemented with additional support from the countries' development partners.

32. UNFPA has also concentrated on increasing efficiency, strengthening management and maximizing funds for country programmes. Emphasis on accountability, cost-effective programme

delivery and timely implementation have all played a role in building confidence among donors. Developing reporting mechanisms and formats that fully meet the needs of all development partners continues to be important in helping the Fund to mobilize income from all sources. Special attention is also being given to illustrating the impact of activities funded from general sources and of regional activities.

D. Adopted targets, new and innovative funding sources and modalities for operational activities

33. The issue of new and innovative funding sources and modalities for operational activities is to be covered extensively in a report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 50/227, annex I, paragraph 17, to which UNFPA has contributed. Given the enormous challenges of raising $17 billion for population assistance by the year 2000, as was agreed to at the ICPD, UNFPA is launching several resource mobilization initiatives with the goal of increasing collaboration with as many potential partners as possible, including the European Union, to generate more resources for population either directly through UNFPA or through bilateral channels. UNFPA's country programme documents and the recently-developed Programme Country Profiles for Population Assistance are being used as a framework for many of these discussions. The Executive Director and senior management are also systematically visiting developing countries to discuss the ways and means for them to meet their share of the total requirement of $17 billion. Another approach being explored is a debt for population swap or debt exchange to generate local resources for population and reproductive health, including family planning, programmes. Preliminary research indicates a number of attractive possibilities that may be well suited to needs in this sector.

34. In the area of multi-bilateral assistance, a number of traditional major donors are utilizing multi-bilateral arrangements more frequently to channel population assistance. As already mentioned, multi-bilateral income reached an all-time high level of $18.3 million (provisional) in 1996. Recently, UNFPA signed an important partnership agreement with the European Commission that will channel over $30 million from the European Commission to reproductive health programmes in Asia. If this arrangement proves successful, the Fund envisages that the European Commission may channel more funding for this area. Fortunately, there is no evidence to indicate that multi-bilateral contributions are being made at the expense of contributions to UNFPA's regular resources.

E. Priorities and programmes agreed by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

35. At its annual session in June 1995, the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board considered the Fund's report on programme priorities and future directions of UNFPA in light of the ICPD (document DP/1995/25), which was the culmination of an intensive process of internal review and

external reviews of the UNFPA programme. Following extensive discussion of the report, the Board adopted decision 95/15 in which it supported the broad outline of the future programme of assistance of UNFPA, which must be implemented in full accordance with the ICPD Programme of Action, and endorsed the core programme areas of reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health; population and development strategies; and advocacy. The aim of such a selection was to enable the Fund to sharpen the focus of its programming and to capitalize on its comparative advantage.

36. Document DP/1995/25 also contained a proposal for a new approach for resource allocation based on the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action. This approach was subsequently revised at the request of the Executive Board (document DP/FPA/1996/15) and endorsed by the Board in decision 96/15. It is based on a country's level of achievement of ICPD goals and recognizes that there is a continuum of needs, from countries that have made little progress towards achieving the ICPD goals to countries that have already reached or surpassed all of these goals.

37. The revised approach pays special attention to low-income countries, least developed countries (LDCs) and sub-Saharan Africa, as called for in the Programme of Action and in various General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions. The new approach particularly emphasizes support to LDCs by including all LDCs in the group of countries that are in greatest need and thus will receive the largest share of UNFPA resources. It recognizes the urgent need for providing temporary assistance to countries with economies in transition, as called for in the Programme of Action and in General Assembly resolution 50/124. It further recognizes the importance of promoting South-South cooperation.

III. Follow-up to ECOSOC Resolution 1996/36: Follow-up to the Major International United Nations Conferences and Summits, including the Implementation of their Respective Programmes of Action

A. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

38. For the follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), UNFPA has acted as the Task Manager for Chapter 5 of Agenda 21 on "Demographic Dynamics and Sustainability" and has also prepared the report for the 1997 Special Session of the General Assembly presenting progress in UNFPA-related areas since the UNCED in 1992. UNFPA has continued to promote greater awareness and visibility of the linkages between population growth and the environment. Apart from those projects in the area of population, environment and development, which are implemented through country programmes, UNFPA also funds a number of activities and projects undertaken by other members of the United Nations system (including FAO, the ILO, UNESCO) and by various types of non-governmental

organizations (NGOs). To better meet the challenges of the ICPD Programme of Action, the Fund has also reviewed its practices and guidelines, including those that deal specifically with population and the environment.

39. UNFPA has contributed to the efforts of the United Nations system in training and developing methodologies and analytical tools for understanding the interactions between population and environment variables. UNFPA's CSTs are providing critical support to national governments in collecting data on environment and population variables. In collaboration with the World Conservation Union (IUCN), UNFPA has prepared a guidebook emphasizing the integration of the population-resource balance in sectoral planning exercises that can be particularly useful to local planning units and national planning ministries in developing countries.

B. International Conference on Population and Development Inter-Agency Task Force for ICPD Follow-up and ACC Task Force on BSSA

40. Coordinated inter-agency follow-up to the recent international conferences is taking place through three inter-agency task forces -- Basic Social Services for All (BSSA), Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development, and Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods for All -- as well as through the inter-agency committee following up the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNFPA has been an active participant in all these United Nations system-wide mechanisms designed to achieve coordinated follow-up to major international conferences. UNFPA chaired the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for Implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, with the participation of 14 United Nations bodies. The task force set up working groups, each with a lead agency, to produce a set of guidelines on central ICPD themes. Entitled "IATF Guidelines for the United Nations Resident Coordinator System" and issued in September 1995, the guidelines addressed the following key areas: reproductive health; women's empowerment; basic education with special attention to gender disparities; a common approach to national capacity-building in tracking child and maternal mortality; and international migration. It also includes "A Common Advocacy Statement on Population and Development". The guidelines seek to foster closer dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations system and other development partners, including bilateral agencies, NGOs, the private sector and civil society, in operationalizing the ICPD Programme of Action at the country level.

41. The success of the IATF led to the establishment by the ACC of three system-wide inter-agency task forces to galvanize the United Nations system follow-up around priority goals emerging from recent global conferences and to rationalize and strengthen the mechanisms for delivery of coordinated assistance at the country and regional levels. The overarching goal of the task forces is poverty eradication. The mandate of the IATF was expanded and it was constituted as the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, under the chairmanship of UNFPA. The other two task forces are on employment and sustainable livelihoods, chaired by the ILO, and on

the requisites of an enabling environment for economic and social development, chaired by the World Bank. UNFPA participates in both these task forces. The progress of work under the BSSA Task Force has been widely reported.

42. The BSSA Task Force, in which 19 United Nations bodies participate, has met twice in 1996 and will meet again in March 1997. Work is progressing well towards preparation and dissemination of the following end-products which will be made available electronically: Guidelines for the United Nations Resident Coordinator System; a wall chart with indicators to monitor progress on the basic provision of basic social services; a report on lessons learned and best practices in donor collaboration in assistance to the social sector; an information card on advocacy for basic social services; and a compendium of international commitments relevant to poverty and social integration. The work of the BSSA Task Force is informed by the following cross-cutting dimensions: gender perspectives; resource mobilization; policy; selection and use of indicators; targeting of specific groups, including those in post-crisis situations; and involvement of civil society. The BSSA Task Force is also covering the main parameters of the 20/20 initiative in its work programme and seeks to concentrate on the area of indicators to monitor progress in achieving the goals of recent global conferences.

43. UNFPA has also focused on operationalizing its three mandated focus areas in the follow-up to the ICPD: reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health; population and development strategies; and advocacy. UNFPA has also adopted a new approach for resource allocation based on a country's level of achievement of ICPD goals, while recognizing that there is a continuum of needs. The new approach pays special attention to low-income countries, LDCs and Africa, as called for in the Programme of Action and the various General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions.

44. UNFPA also continues its long tradition of collaborating with NGOs, including through establishing an NGO Advisory Committee in 1995. In keeping with the Programme of Action, UNFPA is also supporting South-South cooperation activities and activities relating to the needs of youth and adolescents for reproductive health information and services. Overall, in a significant number of developing countries, including those with economies in transition, UNFPA has supported a wide array of activities designed to align programmes and policies with the new people-centred paradigm for population and development that emerged at the ICPD.

C. World Summit for Social Development

45. UNFPA has worked closely in all cooperative efforts among the Commission on Social Development, the chairpersons of the ACC Task Forces and the Committee on Women and Gender Equality with a view to responding to the development needs and priorities of countries, and to meeting the felt needs of women, men, youth and adolescents in the areas of its mandate.

Cooperative efforts have included such cross-cutting dimensions as gender perspectives; resource mobilization; policy; selection and use of indicators; targeting of specific groups, including those in post-crisis situations; and the involvement of civil society. The ACC task forces are also covering the main parameters of the 20/20 initiative, and efforts to come up with a common set of indicators to monitor progress in achieving the goals of recent global conferences.

46. UNFPA has continued to work to ensure that its programming is people-centred and has a human face, particularly working to secure the empowerment of women. The Fund will continue to cooperate with efforts for meeting basic human needs and providing basic social services for all by promoting partnerships at all levels, including governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs, private sector and civil society.

D. Fourth World Conference on Women

47. In the subjects of greatest concern at the Fourth World Conference on Women, UNFPA has primarily focused on three main areas: women's human rights, adolescent reproductive health and gender equality. In the area of women's human rights, UNFPA has worked with the Centre for Reproductive Law and Policy and with NGOs in 51 countries for improvement of women's access to reproductive health care. UNFPA has stepped up its fight to eliminate female genital mutilation (FGM) and in March 1996 conducted a technical consultation on the subject. A framework has been developed for integrating activities relating to the elimination of FGM into UNFPA's core programme areas, and together with UNICEF and WHO the Fund has issued a joint statement on the elimination of FGM. UNFPA also is working with the WHO-sponsored Global Commission on Women's Health to improve the health status of women and girls and to develop new policy guidelines and advocacy tools aimed at enforcing the rights of women and girls within the overall goal of providing health security.

48. UNFPA has also spearheaded initiatives in the adolescent reproductive health area, including working with the Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), to include girls and young women in the formulation and implementation of decisions relating to their reproductive health and educational needs, and is also collaborating with the Thomas Craven Film Corporation to produce a video on the needs, views and aspirations of young women worldwide.

49. Activities undertaken in the area of gender equality, equity and women's empowerment include support to several organizations including NGOs; studies on attitudes of adolescent boys and men on subjects including sexual and reproductive behaviour; a plan of action for reaching the world's poorest women with credit for self-employment and empowerment following the micro-credit summit; mainstreaming gender considerations into all aspects of its reproductive health, population and development strategies and advocacy work; developing training manuals on gender, population and development; and other such related areas of work.

E. United Nations Conference on Human Settlements -- HABITAT II

50. UNFPA participated actively in the preparatory processes of the Habitat II Conference and supported a senior post in the HABITAT Secretariat. UNFPA, together with the Rockefeller Foundation, organized a one-day meeting of 12 experts in New York in October 1995 to discuss HABITAT/population linkages before preparing recommendations for the draft Global Plan of Action. Following HABITAT II, UNFPA has continued the work of defining the linkages among population growth; migration and urban problems; growth of mega-cities in developing countries; the high proportion of youths in urban areas; and the need to strengthen and build upon the consensus reached in other United Nations conferences. After organizing a symposium in January 1996 on "Internal Migration and Urbanization in Developing Countries: Implications for HABITAT II", UNFPA is in the process of bringing out a book containing the recommendations from this effort.

51. UNFPA supports, in conjunction with local authorities in Japan, projects at the Asian Urban Information Centre of Kobe with the aim of increasing the flow and interchange of information on urban problems, urban policies and experiences through a network that covers, in particular, medium-sized cities in Asia. Links with population dynamics are especially emphasized in these projects. At the level of the country programmes, UNFPA supports activities in several countries aimed at improving the lot of urban slum dwellers, in particular by programmes to increase access to reproductive health services and by including community NGO groups in the planning and implementation of the programmes.

F. World Food Summit

52. Consistent with the ICPD Programme of Action, which emphasizes the linkages between population growth, environment protection and food security, UNFPA organized jointly with FAO, in June 1996, an Expert Group Meeting on Food Requirements and Population Growth. The findings and recommendations of the meeting helped in clarifying the issues related to population and food security in general. UNFPA's PRSD exercises are, to an increasing extent, considering energy requirements, agricultural production and food security, along with environmental issues, as part of the analytical framework on the basis of which UNFPA-supported country programmes are developed. Through its regional CSTs, the Fund is providing crucial technical support to assist developing countries in addressing the ICPD and World Food Summit challenges and in integrating population, food security and environment variables in the national population and development strategies of countries. In collaboration with FAO, UNFPA is considering through the TSS system means to strengthen a common follow-up mechanism to the goals of the ICPD and World Food Summit.

IV. Follow-up to ECOSOC Resolution 1996/43: Strengthening Collaboration Between the United Nations Development System and the Bretton Woods Institutions

53. The momentum created by the ICPD and the other recent major international conferences has increased the importance of coordination and the integrated follow-up mechanisms that have been established in the context of the ACC and has provided a strong new basis for cooperation among the various partners in the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. UNFPA continues to play an active role in facilitating this process. Collaboration with Bretton Woods institutions is an important positive aspect of these mechanisms. In the cooperation between UNFPA and the Bretton Woods institutions, much of the policy-level collaboration is in direct support of programme-level cooperation. UNFPA enjoys relatively good cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and is working hard to assess how the relationships can be improved.

54. During the past year, in response to ECOSOC resolution 1996/43, together with the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UNFPA participated in a Senior Officials Working Group on Strengthening Collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions. The review contains useful information on ongoing collaboration and lessons learned and makes a number of useful suggestions for the future, including for countries facing special circumstances, exchange of information and data in key areas for policy analysis as well as in the area of planned research and policy studies, and theme-oriented working groups.

55. For UNFPA, it is notable that this review also concluded that there are a number of very positive examples of cooperation, including "the UNAIDS programme, crime and drug control, the United Nations Conference follow-up, population in general, and the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, in particular the Special Initiative on Africa, and the Global Environment Fund (GEF)". Recent attempts at coordinated follow-up to world conferences has enhanced collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and the World Bank chairs one of the current ACC task forces, with UNFPA and the ILO chairing the other two. The World Bank is taking the lead in producing an information card on advocacy for basic social services and, together with the UNDP, is also taking the lead in producing a publication on lessons learned and best practices in donor collaboration in assistance to the social sector. The Bretton Woods institutions contributed to the Guidelines to the Resident Coordinator System, which was one of the products of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. The task forces combine global and policy-level initiatives, providing both policy coherence and practical application through more coordinated and collaborative operational activities and technical cooperation. They focus on preparing a set of guidance notes

and lessons learned for use at the country level, within the Resident Coordinator system, and on key indicators to monitor progress in achieving the goals of recent United Nations global conferences.

56. Bilaterally, UNFPA and the Bretton Woods institutions share a tradition of consultation and cooperation at global, regional and country levels. UNFPA holds frequent consultations with the World Bank and the regional development banks. At all levels the focus is on both selected substantive and policy issues and country-specific cooperation and as well as on global efforts, such as Education For All, that are being carried out in partnership with UNESCO and other organizations. These collaborative efforts contain both global advocacy activities and specific country programme cooperation. UNFPA has been also participating in other inter-agency efforts for collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, e.g., in the JCGP and CCPOQ, within the context of the Resident Coordinator system.

57. In addition to improving and expanding complementarity and collaboration in activities supported by UNFPA and the Bretton Woods institutions at global, regional and policy levels, there have been further efforts at improving country-level consultations. The World Bank participates more regularly in coordination mechanisms for the population sector at the country level at which UNFPA plays a prominent role. Increasingly, World Bank missions are in contact with UNFPA country offices, and UNFPA routinely contacts the Bank prior to its programming exercises. This has inevitably led to greater exchanges at the strategy and programme development stage, and this has helped reduce the workload of all, especially the country concerned, and has promoted harmonization of policy approaches and strategies. There is also cooperation in the actual project work, with UNFPA providing technical expertise and procurement services to the Bank, and the Fund participates actively in World Bank-led consortia of donors.

58. UNFPA, conscious of the need for more consistency in the policy advice and strategies being advanced by the various donors in a country, is in the process of institutionalizing closer cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions to enhance such consistency. Efforts are being made to ensure that collaboration in all programming stages are built into the programmes from their inception. To succeed, all parties would need to provide equally strong support for these initiatives.